

City of Alexandria, Virginia


MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 27, 2011

TO: BRAC-133 Advisory Group Chairman David Dexter, Vice-Chair
Geoffrey Goodale and Advisory Group Members

FROM: Rich Baier, P.E., LEED AP
Director, Transportation and Environmental Services

SUBJECT: Consideration of Alternatives for Mark Center Access



In follow up to the BRAC-133 Advisory Group discussion last week, I wanted to provide a brief overview of the history of the current VDOT alternative (formerly referred to as Alternative F). The consideration of alternatives for access from I-395 to the BRAC-133 facility at the Mark Center has a long history going back several years. In that time, eleven alternatives have been considered by VDOT. Below is a summary of the alternatives:

No-Build Alternatives:

- No-Build Alternative including HOT Lanes Proposed Transit Ramp to Seminary Road Rotary
- No Build Alternative including Mark Center Proffered Improvements

Build Alternatives:

- Alternative A1 – Southbound Ramp on Flyover to the South Parking Garage
- Alternative A2 – Southbound Ramp to the South Parking Garage
- Alternative B1 – Southbound Ramp to the Private Road
- Alternative B2 - Southbound Ramp to the Mark Center Drive
- Alternative C - General Purpose Lanes Flyover
- Alternative D – HOT Lanes Flyover (Reversible One-Lane) to Mark Center Drive
- Alternative E – HOT Lanes Flyover (Two-Lane) to Mark Center Drive
- Alternative F – HOV/Transit Reversible Ramp from the I-395 HOV/Transit Lane to Seminary Road Third Level Bridge over I-395
- Alternative G – HOV/Transit Ramp to Seminary Road West of I-395 (requires reconstruction of the Seminary Road Bridge over I-395)

The No-Build Alternatives and Alternatives “A2, B1, B2, C, and E” were eliminated from further consideration by VDOT. The remaining Alternatives “A1 and D” were to be advanced for further analysis. After presentation of “A1 and D” to the Advisory Group in February 2010, and presentation to the Advisory Group on March 1, 2010 of two additional conceptual interchange alternatives, David Dexter, BRAC-133 Advisory Group Chair, received input from the BRAC-133 Advisory Group and sent a letter dated March 8, 2010 to City Council outlining the Advisory Group’s recommendations (see Attachment 1). The Advisory Group recommended that Alternatives “A1 and D” be eliminated from further consideration. That letter also recommended further study and consideration of what was to become Alternative “F” and Alternative “G” (HOV/Transit Ramp to Seminary Road West of I-395).

On March 24, 2010, Mayor Euille sent a letter to VDOT (see Attachment 2) requesting they include what would later become known as Alternatives “F and G” in their analysis. This generated a response from Secretary Connaughton dated April 5, 2010 (see Attachment 3) in which he agreed to include these alternatives if the City provided additional funding. After securing additional funding from the Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment and the City, Alternatives “F and G” were more fully developed by VDOT, and a preliminary scope of work for analysis was presented to the BRAC-133 Advisory Group at their May 10, 2010 meeting. The Advisory Group endorsed the study, and these alternatives were the basis of the continued Long-term Road Improvements Analysis by VDOT. Elimination of Alternative “G” from further consideration resulted when VDOT announced their intent in a letter dated February 2, 2011 (see Attachment 4) to advance and fund Alternative “F” and eliminate Alternative “G”. A supporting resolution was adopted by City Council on February 4, 2011 (see Attachment 5).

In summary, The BRAC-133 Advisory Group and City Council have supported the assessment and development of Alternative “F” (HOV/Transit Ramp from the HOV/Transit Lane to the Seminary Road Third Level Bridge Over I-395) while nine other preliminary alternatives did not gain support. The Alternative “F” concept moved forward with the support of the Advisory Group, beginning in March, 2010. The support continued until VDOT allocated \$80 million for design and construction of the HOV/Transit ramp.

VDOT has proposed to include two alternatives in the Environmental Assessment. One of the alternatives proposed is Alternative “F” and the other concept is a variation of this alternative which precludes HOV/Transit vehicles from turning right (travel eastbound) at the top of the HOV/Transit ramp. A meeting is being set up with VDOT, FHWA, City Staff and the BRAC-133 Advisory Group Chair and Vice-chair, and then VDOT will be available for questions and answers at the regularly scheduled September meeting of the BRAC-133 Advisory Group. If you have any additional questions, please contact me.

CC: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

Bruce Johnson, Acting City Manager

Mark Jinks, Deputy City Manager

Michele Evans, Deputy City Manager

Abi Lemmer, Deputy Director, TES

David Grover, BRAC Coordinator